



U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations

PRESS RELEASE

Consolidated Security, Disaster Assistance, and Continuing Appropriations Act, 2009

The continuing resolution for Fiscal Year 2009 would provide funding for government operations at FY 2008 levels through March 6, 2009.

The bill includes the FY 2009 Department of Homeland Security, Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Defense appropriations bills, and an emergency supplemental for national disasters such as the Midwest floods, and Hurricanes Ike and Gustav.

“This overall package lives up to the Democrats commitment to supporting our troops, taking care of our veterans, securing our homeland, providing help for families on Main Street, and directing relief to the victims of natural disasters all across this great Nation of ours,” said Senator Robert C. Byrd, D-W.Va., the Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee.

KEY ADDITIONS:

Advanced Vehicle Manufacturing Loan Guarantee

The \$7.5 billion included would support \$25 billion for the retooling of vehicle manufacturing plants in the United States toward the goal of building more efficient cars. It is estimated that domestic manufacturers could add up to 60,000 jobs if automobile manufacturing plants were re-tooled to build advanced technology vehicles.

Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

The \$5.1 billion provided in the continuing resolution for FY 2009 would almost double the amount of funds available to States, allowing an additional 5.7 million households to get home heating and cooling assistance.

These funds are urgently needed to help low-income families pay arrearages from last winter’s high cost of home heating and begin preparing for the soaring energy prices that are expected this winter.

At the current funding level, LIHEAP serves only 15 percent of eligible families. With heating prices estimated to increase by 20 percent this winter, far fewer families will be served if these funds are not provided.

In both warm weather states and cold weather states, utility shutoffs have increased due to the struggling economy and record-high energy costs. Approximately 15.6 million households could face utility shutoffs because they can't pay their energy bill.

Weatherization Assistance Program

At a time of rising oil, natural gas, and electricity prices, \$250 million is included to help low-income families lower their energy costs by sending funds to the states to weatherize low-income homes. This funding improves the energy efficiency of low-income housing, supports more than 8000 existing jobs, can be used applied to the approximately 10 million eligible households. At today's prices, this investment can save over \$400 in energy costs per household this year.